

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

McDonough County, Illinois

April 2017 Newsletter

Advocacy Network for Children Mission Statement: To protect and uphold the rights of children when wrongs have been committed against them; to help abused or neglected children have safe, permanent homes where they can thrive; to act as a powerful voice in these children's best interest and to educate the public about the plight of unrepresented children within the child welfare system.

April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with some indicators of possible abuse. If you suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, follow the guidelines given after this article.

Tips for Recognizing Child Abuse*

General Warning Signs. The child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance;
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention;
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen;
- Lacks adult supervision; or
- Often wears long sleeves or other concealing clothing during warm weather.

Physical Abuse Warning Signs. The child:

- Has bruises or injuries but is too young to walk or injure themselves accidentally;
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school;
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home; or
- Shrinks at the approach of adults.

Neglect Warning Signs. The child:

- Frequently absent from school;
- Begs or steals food or money from others;
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses;
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor;
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather;
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs; or
- States there is no one at home to provide care.

Sexual Abuse Warning Signs. The child:

- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver;
- Regresses to bedwetting or suddenly begins experiencing frequent nightmares or night terrors;
- Has difficulty walking or sitting;
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior;
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, or
- Runs away.

Mental Abuse Warning Signs. The child:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity or aggression;
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging for example);
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development;
- Has attempted suicide or reports suicidal thoughts; or
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parents.

How do I report suspected abuse or neglect?

Call the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873) if you suspect that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect. If you believe a child is in immediate danger of harm, call 911 first.

If you suspect abuse or neglect you have a social responsibility to report it to the hotline. Your confidential call will not only make sure the child is safe, but also help provide the child's family the services they need to provide a safe, loving and nurturing home.

In addition, state law requires that most professionals in education, health care, law enforcement and social work report suspected neglect or abuse.

State law protects the confidentiality of all reporters, and your name is never disclosed. You may still choose to make a report anonymously, but the inability of investigators to follow-up with you to obtain additional information may impede our investigation and the child's safety. The law protects you from civil liability for any call made in good faith.

Blue and Silver Pinwheels are the symbol of Child Abuse Prevention. CASA of McDonough County will be introducing these pretty, yet meaningful, pinwheels at various events this April. When you spot one of these pinwheels around our community, remember it is in honor of abused and neglected children and the efforts to prevent it happening to another child!

You are cordially invited to attend the Flag Raising at Macomb City Hall at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, April 4th. This heartfelt ceremony honors abused and neglected children around the world. The City Police Honor Guard will raise the Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness flag which will fly for the month of April.

*A publication, "Tips for Recognizing Child Abuse", Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

**THERE ARE ABUSED AND
NEGLECTED CHILDREN IN
McDONOUGH COUNTY WAITING
FOR THEIR CASA.**

YOU COULD BE THAT CASA!

On May 1st we will begin a new CASA volunteer training class. We will meet Monday and Wednesday evenings through June 5th. Call Vicki Duba at 309.544.0003 for more information.



CASA - Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 29 – Food Insecurity and the Impact on Our Children. This day long workshop in the Grand Ballroom of the WIU Union is co-hosted by the Interagency Council of McDonough County and Western Illinois University. Great speakers, including key note speaker Colleen Callahan, former Illinois State Director, USDA Rural Development. For more information go to wiu.edu/coehs/iac2017 or call Pete Tarantola at 309-837-5437 between 8 AM and 4 PM. (Continuing education credits for you CASA volunteers!)

April – Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month

April 4 – Flag Raising at Macomb City Hall. 12:00 noon. The tradition of raising the Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention flag at Macomb City Hall continues. Mayor Inman will read a proclamation and the Honor Guard will raise the flag and it will continue to fly throughout the month of April to promote awareness of child abuse. **Please join us to show your support!** We will be handing out blue and silver pinwheels, the symbol of child abuse prevention.

April 8 – Koins for Kids. Please give a couple hours of your time at one of our collection sites. The “koin” collected will help assure abused and neglected children in McDonough County have a CASA! Contact Vicki Duba at 309-544-0003 to schedule your time.

April 19 – Evening Poverty Simulation In-Service. 6:00 – 8:00 PM. CASA of McDonough County has partnered with the University of Illinois Extension Office to conduct this poverty simulation. The event simulates living a life in poverty and needing to rely on the “system” to help meet the family’s basic needs. The simulation is most successful when there is a good-sized group to participate. If you are a member of a local food pantry or school backpack program, agency, a church with outreach or mission committees or an individual interested in participating, please call Vicki Duba, 309-544-0003 to reserve a spot!

April 29 – Run for CASA’S Kids! 8:00 AM, Old Dairy, 210 Lafayette Street, Macomb. First 5K run/walk with a 1 mile family and children’s walk. All proceeds go to CASA of McDonough County. For a paper/mail in registration form go to advonet.org. On-line registrations, go to runforcasaskids.itsyourrace.com.

May 9 - Brown Bag Lunch at 12:00 noon. Kate McGruder, Director of Early Beginnings will speak about the services her program offers to children and their families. We will meet on the second floor of the First Presbyterian Church.

June 24 – Heritage Day Parade. Get out those walking shoes . . . the stroller for the baby . . . and the leash for the dog! Plan to join us for the fun of walking in the parade!

July 14 – Medical Aspects of Child Maltreatment – Key Note Speaker, Dr. Channing Petrak, MD, OSF Healthcare. Spoon River Macomb Outreach Center. Save the date and plan to attend this important training. More details coming!